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WAR

Comedy-Drama in 3 Acts

— by —

CHAS. GOLDZIER



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115 Broadway, New York



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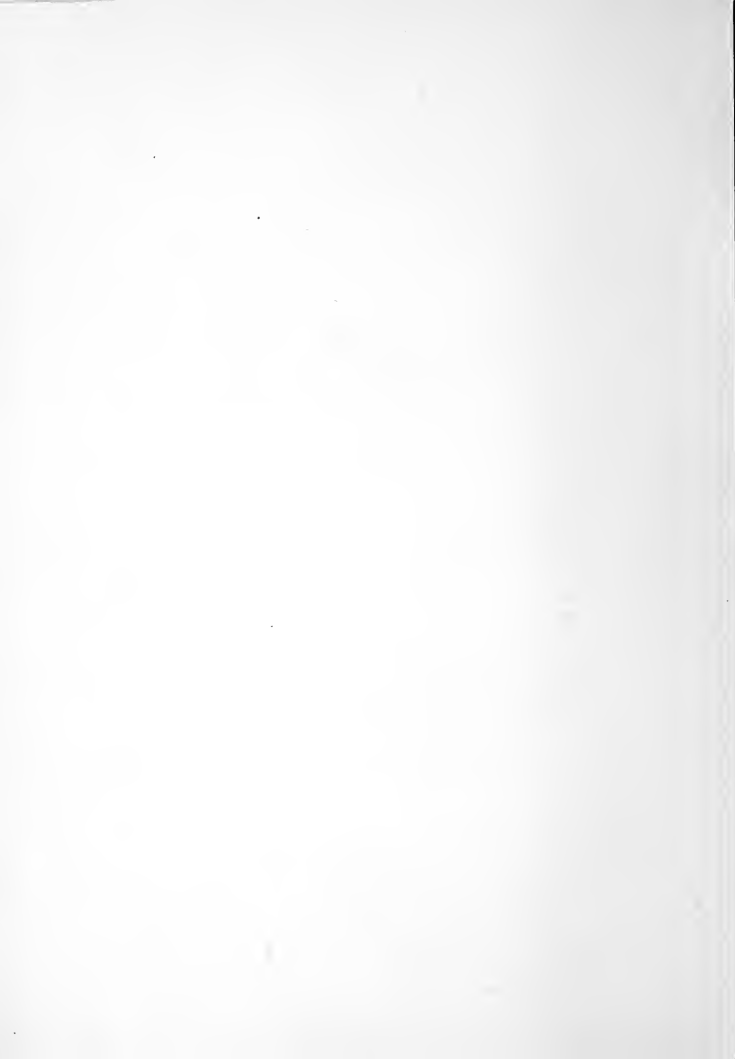
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under

- ACT I Scene 1—Plays at the city of Metz before the
 war.
 Scene 2—Three weeks later.
 Scene 3—The same day.
- ACT II Scene 1—Plays at Paris, one month later.
 Scene 2—Plays at Metz the following day.
- ACT III Scene 1—Plays at Metz the day following.
 Scene 2—Plays on a road to Luneville.
 Scene 3—Plays at Chateau d'Un the same night
 and the following morning.



INTRODUCTION

"Think not I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword."—MATT. 10: 34.

A few leisure hours of my declining years have been devoted to the authorship of a play, which, since it does not deal with sex problems, murder or other crimes, is obviously unfit for production upon the modern stage.

I have published it to discount a fame which may come to me long after I am dead and buried, and for the entertainment of friends—or foes.

Possible criticism, which may depend upon individual taste or malice, is unanswerable.

I hope, however, that I may not have transgressed upon American neutrality by endowing the German soldier with human attributes instead of representing him as a monstrosity.

To me the warrior of whatever nation is a human being who is driven to inhuman acts by heredity, tradition, passion, and the compulsion of natural laws and social economic conditions, for which he is not responsible. I pity him for what he endures—and for what he inflicts.

The palpable "Germanism" of my play is a territorial necessity of the plot. Within its limitation I have been fair to the cause of the French, for whom individually and as a nation I have the highest admiration.

The grains of "philosophy" which may be found disseminated through some of the pages are not merely

satire or sophistry, but comprise theorems which have been convincingly expounded in the writings of some ancient and modern scientists. I leave it to the ingenuity of my audience to cull their wheat from my chaff or *vice versa*.

I decline to pollute my stage with human gore and have purposely avoided visible indications of carnage, but never fear, the inevitable warfare of extermination goes on merrily behind the scenes.

I do not take myself too seriously, but have dealt with grave events lightly, not to say superciliously. My play does not pretend to preach, to teach, to reform—it aims to amuse.

If it be objected that some of my situations are farcical—well, bitter pills must be sugar-coated, and I point to real life, which, in peace and war, commingles tragedy and comedy to an extent which would seem incredible were the fact not demonstrated by daily experience and observation.

The final prophesy of a coming brotherhood of men is not in accord with past experience or the apparent design of a benign providence, but is the suggestion of a glorious “pipe-dream,” pure and simple.

While my inclinations are strongly anti-militant, I have come to the reluctant conclusion that war is as truly a sequel to our civilization as it was its prelude, since immutable laws of evolution may not be denied or defied. To the victor the spoils, to the vanquished a grave. *De saeculam ad saeculorem*. What then? *Swim or sink, live or die, survive or perish*—“SEMPER PARATUS.”

And now let the curtain rise.

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Corner of parade ground with fortress in the rear. The ground behind the scenes appears to be occupied by maneuvering troops, stamping of horses, signals. Soldiers guard barrier behind which are congregated spectators, officers and soldiers passing in and out of barracks.)

FIRST CITIZEN: Another maneuver. This time it is cavalry. There seems to be nothing but maneuvering, rifle practice, tramping horses, roaring guns, turmoil and noise day after day.

SECOND CITIZEN: Yes, it reminds one of the war more than forty years ago, before you were born. I was a boy, but I remember the goings on just before the surrender by the French. There was drilling and marching of soldiery within the gate and out of the gate, the rumble of cannon, the digging of trenches, and we expected every day to hear the German guns and see balls shatter the walls of our buildings. It was exciting, and we boys enjoyed it.

FIRST CITIZEN: But now, in times of peace. We have lived here for a good many years and there was never anything like it.

SECOND CITIZEN: And we taxpayers have to foot the bills for all that waste of valuable time and good ammunition.

FIRST CITIZEN: Pst! (*looking around cautiously*)
 Friend, I would advise you not to talk so loud. This
 deprecation of our military sounds much like treason
 or sedition.

SECOND CITIZEN: You know I was born French, and
 French I am at heart.

FIRST CITIZEN: At heart you may be what you please,
 but you are amongst the Germans, and must dance
 according to their music.

SECOND CITIZEN: A conquered race——

FIRST CITIZEN: Silence! I cannot listen to that talk
 against the country of my birth. I have nothing
 against France, but I am a German by birth, and
 German we will remain to the end of all times.

A VOICE: They are coming.

(*They turn towards the barrier from which is dis-
 tantly heard the clatter of advancing horses.*)

FIRST CITIZEN: Don't they look splendid. They are in
 parade uniform. In war times they would be dressed
 in gray, so as not to be visible from any distance,
 but now their helmets glitter in the sunlight and
 they seem to be covered with gold all over.

SECOND CITIZEN: I suppose that is the general staff. Is
 the one riding ahead Von Moltke?

FIRST CITIZEN: That is the staff of the Fifth Division,
 and I should know Von Moltke—I served in Berlin
 for three years. I am in the reserve.

SECOND CITIZEN: Who are they?

FIRST CITIZEN: That is the staff of the Fifth Division,

which includes Metz. General Von Brunn rides in advance.

SECOND CITIZEN: Now the squadron has passed. Are these the Uhlans right behind them?

FIRST CITIZEN: Yes, they are preparing for a charge. Watch and you will see some riding.

VOICE: My God! What is that fool woman doing there on horseback right in the road of the squadron?

VOICES: Where? On the black horse? I see.

VOICE: There, to the right.

FIRST CITIZEN: Her horse has run away with her. She is trying to hold it.

VOICES: She has fallen off. She is killed. Right in the way of the regiment. She will be ground to pieces.

SECOND CITIZEN: Look at the man jumping right in front of the horses, the fool! What does he want? He will be killed, too!

FIRST CITIZEN: No, he has grabbed her in time. He saved her.

ALL: Bravo! Bravo!

SECOND CITIZEN: He is bringing her here. Make room for them.

(Franz enters with Eva in arm. She has apparently fainted. He lays her on a bench. They are surrounded by spectators.)

FRANZ: Gentlemen, make room! Give her air! A glass of water! Is there a doctor around?

(Enter Capt. Stamm)

CAPT. STAMM: What is the matter? *(Approaching Eva, sinks on one knee.)* My God, it is my Eva!

Speak to your father, little girl. Is she dead?

(Doctor enters, examines her, feels pulse.)

DOCTOR *(to Capt. Stamm)*: She has only fainted. No bones broken, although there is a bruise on her ankle, but nothing serious. How was she injured?

FIRST CITIZEN: She fell from her horse right in front of the cavalry charge, and would have been trampled to death if this brave young fellow had not rescued her at the risk of his life.

CAPT. STAMM *(shaking hand of Franz)*: My dear young man, how can I ever thank you for saving my daughter's life?

FRANZ: Oh, it was nothing. Why, you don't know our Uhlans. They would have stopped their horses in time and one of them would have lifted her to his horse by an eyelash. She couldn't get hurt.

EVA *(recovering)*: Where am I? What has happened?

CAPT. STAMM: You fell from your horse and would have been killed if this brave gentleman had not picked you up in time.

EVA *(to Franz)*: How can I thank you for saving my life? *(Giving him her hand, which he kisses and is about to leave.)* You are not going to leave us without giving your name? I want you to meet my mother, so that she may thank you personally.

FRANZ: You make too much of a little service. I assure you there was no risk. I know my Uhlans and their horses.

CAPT. STAMM: What is your name? Where do you live?

FRANZ: My name is Franz Frei. I live—well, it is summer, nice and warm, and I prefer to sleep out in the woods.

CAPT. STAMM (*observing him closely*): You do not look prosperous.

FRANZ: I am not a bloated millionaire.

CAPT. STAMM: I did not want to offend you by offering you money, but——

FRANZ (*interrupting*): I am not a professional life saver, and your daughter's life in any event would be priceless.

CAPT. STAMM: Well said, young man, but I want you to come home with us and have dinner.

FRANZ: Dinner sounds well to a man who has eaten nothing since yesterday morning, but in these clothes——

CAPT. STAMM: Never mind your dress. We will find something for you at the house. Are you really so poor? And what can be done for you?

FRANZ: I need work and need it very badly.

CAPT. STAMM: Have you no relatives in Metz?

FRANZ: I am a stranger.

CAPT. STAMM: Work? Do you want to join the army?

FRANZ: No, sir, thanking you. I want work, not—— (*interrupting himself*). Excuse me. I did not mean to be offensive.

CAPT. STAMM: What can you do?

FRANZ: Oh, anything that requires much physical exertion and a very little brainwork.

CAPT. STAMM: Can you manage an automobile?

FRANZ: Indeed I can. I am fully qualified as a chauffeur.

CAPT. STAMM: Then I can use you myself. I recently bought an automobile for 500 Mark; it is a beautiful machine, and I used to manage it splendidly, but during the last few months we have been kept so busy playing war that I found no time to use it, and my wife and daughter do not know how to run it, and seem to be afraid to learn. I will employ you as chauffeur for the present and we can see what can be done later. I can't afford to pay you much.

FRANZ: So long as I can make any living I am well satisfied.

CAPT. STAMM (*to Eva, who has been attended by doctor*): Eva, Mr. Frei will accompany us home and have dinner with us.

EVA: I am so glad (*trying to stand up*). I am afraid my ankle is sprained and I will be unable to walk.

FRANZ: I will get a carriage. (*Exit and returns.*) The carriage is waiting, Miss.

(*Captain and Franz assist Eva and exit while the scene changes.*)

SCENE 2

(*Sitting room of Captain Stamm's residence. Mrs. Stamm discovered sitting at table, sewing. Enter Franz.*)

FRANZ: Shall I serve breakfast, Madam?

MRS. STAMM: The Captain has not returned?

FRANZ: No, Madam. He went out very early this morning and left word that he could not say when he would be back.

MRS. STAMM: This is provoking! Life was so peaceful until just a few weeks past, and now it is nothing but maneuvers and exercises, marching and counter-marching. He is hardly ever home. Why, the General Staff must be crazy! If this goes on he will grow skinny, and he has become so nice and fat during the last twenty years of rest. It agreed with him.

FRANZ: Why, Madam! This sounds like high treason, or lese majeste, or something. The General Staff is infallible.

MRS. STAMM: Is Miss Eva downstairs?

FRANZ: Miss Eva has been down in the kitchen for some time and is quarreling with the cook about how long it takes to boil a five-minute egg.

MRS. STAMM: You may serve. I do wish the Captain would attend his meals as promptly as he attends his stupid maneuvers.

(Franz has prepared breakfast table and about to leave. Enter Eva, much excited, in her hand a closed envelope.)

EVA: Oh, Mama! Mama! a letter from Paris. Eugene's handwriting. Dear Eugene! *(Hands letter to Mrs. Stamm, who opens and reads it.)*

EVA: Is he coming? How I long to see him after two weary years of absence!

MRS. STAMM *(embarrassed)*: He does not say that he

will come. I fear I cannot make out——

EVA: Can't I see Eugene's letter? Does he not write to me? Does he not mention me?

(Enter Franz with breakfast service. Mrs. Stamm places her finger to her lips, indicating silence to Eva, and continues perusing the letter, while Eva observes her anxiously. Exit Franz.)

EVA (*excitedly*): The letter, Mama! I want to see the letter.

(Mrs. Stamm hides the letter in her bosom and pours out coffee, while Eva looks surprised. The clatter of a sword is heard outside.)

MRS. STAMM: Your father! Not a word to him about the letter, do you hear?

(Enter Captain Stamm. Behind him, Franz, who assists in relieving him of helmet and sword.)

CAPT. STAMM (*shaking himself*): Good morning, children. This is a dog's life. These recruits will break my heart. There I have been drilling them since five o'clock. Shoulder arms! Carry arms! March right! March left! and this all of a sudden. One would imagine the enemy were before the gates of Metz (*drinking coffee which Mrs. Stamm has served him*). Oh, this is good! Eva, will you go to the kitchen and prepare my eggs? You know how I like them. That confounded cook always says that five-minute eggs must be boiled for ten minutes.

(Exit Eva and Franz.)

MRS. STAMM: More coffee, Father?

CAPT. STAMM: Just a little. Any news from Eugene, Mother?

MRS. STAMM (*stammering*): No—none that I know of.

CAPT. STAMM: What the devil is the matter with the boy? We don't see him, we don't hear from him lately. You know, Triene, I don't like this French business. Why didn't the boy stay here or go to Berlin, if you please? If he is an artist, we have as good colleges and art schools here as they have in Paris or anywhere else. I want him to become a good German, and not have him imbued with Parisian mannerisms and notions.

MRS. STAMM: But, Father——

CAPT. STAMM (*interrupting*): Yes, I know you Lorrainiens don't feel that way. I don't blame you who are born under French rule, but my children are born Germans, and Germans they will remain to the end of their existence.

MRS. STAMM: But Constance?

CAPT. STAMM: Constance! always Sister Constance. He is our boy and should be home.

MRS. STAMM: Now, father, be reasonable. Sister Constance is rich, while we have only enough to secure a dowery for our Eva. Constance promised to look out for our boy and make him her heir if we sent him to Paris. She has done well by him; he likes her home. You would not spoil the future of your child?

CAPT. STAMM: Well, have it your way, but he will have to return soon to serve his time in the army. (*En-*

ter Eva, carrying dish.) Well, Eva, how are the eggs?

EVA: Just as you like them, Pa, but I had to pull the cook's hair to rescue them.

CAPT. STAMM (*laughing*): War in peace, and Germany conquers. (*He is served by Eva and eats hurriedly.*) Now, children, I have to leave you again. Duty—*infernal duty*. We have a riding lesson. Just think of it, with that girth! With my *avoirdupois*—I who get seasick when I ride on a rocking chair. The horses actually laugh when they see me and shed bitter tears after I have mounted (*ringing bell. Enter Franz.*) Franz, my spurs and riding breeches.

FRANZ: Shall I saddle the horse?

CAPT. STAMM: No, stupid! Saddle your machine. I want to be as comfortable as I can until I get to that wretched riding school. When I get through with this I won't want to look a horse in the face. With automobiles and aeroplanes, what do we want horses for, and what business has the infantry on horseback, anyway? The next thing they will have me mount a submarine. But orders are orders.

(*Exit Franz.*)

MRS. STAMM and EVA (*embracing and patting Capt. Stamm*): Poor dear, such a bother!

CAPT. STAMM (*kissing them*): Never mind, there will be an end to this some time. I will not be home for dinner. Good-bye.

(*Exit with Eva, who clings to him.*)

MRS. STAMM (*takes letter from her bosom, stares at it, cries*): My God! my God! where will this end? Why did I permit Constance to have her way? How can I excuse this—how explain it to my husband? Poor Eugene! (*Her head sinks to the table, above the letter; hides her face, sobbing.*)

(*Enter Eva.*)

EVA (*rushing to Mrs. Stamm, placing her arms around her shoulder*): Why, Mama, in tears! What ails you? (*Sees letter. Frightened.*) Eugene? There is nothing the matter with him? He is not sick? Mama, I must know. Give me the letter.

MRS. STAMM (*handing her letter*): Eugene is well.

EVA (*perusing letter*): Dear Eugene, he seems to be very happy. How interestingly he writes and (*clapping her hands*) he will be home soon! He will be home soon! He expects shortly to graduate from St. Cyr. Mama, is St. Cyr not a military school?

MRS. STAMM (*hesitant*): Yes, a military college.

EVA (*surprised*): A military school? I thought Eugene was studying art and was to become a painter. He always showed great talent. Why, I have some of his little pictures which he sent from Paris. They are beautiful.

MRS. STAMMS (*listless*): Your brother has great talent.

EVA (*joyously*): So Eugene is to graduate as an officer. Just like father, and he will fight battles and become a great commander and join the General Staff and be decorated. How jolly!

MRS. STAMM: He will graduate into the *French* army.

EVA (*surprised*): The *French* army? He, a German! He was born right here in Metz.

MRS. STAMM: So were you—so was I.

EVA (*spiritedly*): Well, we are Germans.

MRS. STAMM (*placing her arm around Eva's waist*): Of course you are German, my dear.

EVA: And you?

MRS. STAMM: You cannot possibly appreciate my position in this matter. I was born when Alsace-Lorraine was French territory. I was brought up in a French school. I spoke French. I thought French. My heart, my sympathies were with France, and when we became German provinces the change was heartbreaking.

EVA: You married a German.

MRS. STAMM: Ah, Eva! love knows no country and marriage recognizes no boundary. My husband is a German—so am I (*smiling*). Some time you may come to understand that feeling.

EVA: Why did Eugene ever go to Paris?

MRS. STAMM (*seating herself on a lounge and drawing Eva towards her*): You know your Aunt Constance married a Frenchman, the Marquis Chambord. He was old and very rich. They traveled and eventually settled down at his chateau near Paris. He died without children, leaving his fortune to your aunt. She felt very lonesome and importuned us to send Eugene to her. She promised to keep him as her own child and make him the heir to a large fortune. We are not rich—your brother exhibited great talent

for painting, and so your father and I agreed that it would be best to accept Constance's proposition and have him brought up in Paris, the great center of art.

EVA: But he is not studying art.

MRS. STAMM: Yes, he has an excellent teacher and has made tremendous progress in painting.

EVA: But he is at a military school.

MRS. STAMM: Well, you see, his aunt insisted.

EVA: Insisted?

MRS. STAMM: She was providing for the child's education. She had substantially adopted him. She begged so hard to have him become a soldier. I let her have her way.

EVA: And Papa?

MRS. STAMM (*wringing her hands*): Oh, Eva dear, he does not know! He would never have consented.

EVA (*rising, surprised*): So you and that precious aunt of mine conspired behind father's back to make a French soldier of my poor brother! I declare——

MRS. STAMM: Oh, dearie, you mustn't speak so of your mother and your aunt!

EVA: Aunt Fiddlesticks! Why didn't she adopt me? Why doesn't she leave her fortune to poor me? (*Takes photograph from bureau and looks at it attentively.*) Mama, I do not approve of that close intimacy between a young man and (*grudgingly*) a good-looking young widow. (*Stamping*) I will rescue the poor dupe from that—that—French-

woman! (*Throws photo on table and hurries toward door.*)

MRS. STAMM: Eva, child! What's got into you? Why, I never saw you in such a temper.

(*Enter Franz, announcing.*)

FRANZ: Miss Van Glan.

EVA (*rushing to visitor, embracing her*): Bella dear, what brings you to Metz? Or is it your ghost?

BELLA: I am on a visit to my sister; you know she has married an officer and has settled in your city.

EVA (*introducing*): Mama, this is Bella Van Glan, my dearest friend at college in Berlin. This is my mother. I hope you are here for a long stay.

MRS. STAMM: I am so pleased to meet you, Miss Bella. Why, Eva never gets tired talking of you. But I suppose you girls will have lots to say to each other, and girlish confidences are not for the ears of an antique. So I will attend to my household duties and leave you two together. Will you dine with us? Yes? How nice. Au revoir. (*Exit through a side door.*)

(*During that scene Franz had stood at the door in stiff military attitude, evidently intent upon removing the breakfast service, but prevented from doing so by the fact that the ladies were grouped around the table, and Bella had from time to time looked at him slyly.*)

BELLA (*aside to Eva*): What is it? (*nodding toward Franz*).

EVA (*surprised*): What is what?

BELLA: Is it alive?

EVA: Why, Bella, what do you mean?

BELLA: I would like to stick a pin into him to see him jump.

EVA (*shocked*): You naughty girl! Are you trying to flirt with our poor Franz?

BELLA (*laughing*): Franz! What a funny name! It sounds quite French.

(They have left the table and Franz has gathered up the tableware. Exit Franz.)

EVA: Yes? Franz is a good boy.

BELLA (*laughing*): A boy? Why, he is a perfect giant. Who is he and what is he?

EVA (*superciliously*): Oh, we don't know his family history. He snowed in this summer. Papa engaged him as a chauffeur. You know, we have an automobile now, but we use him as a butler, a secretary, and in his off hours he instructs me in music and Latin.

BELLA: Oh, I see, a sort of maid of all work. He does not make your dresses and comb your hair? A chauffeur as a teacher. You must be making rapid progress.

EVA: Bella, be sensible. What are you up to this morning? Anything special?

BELLA: I almost forgot. I am on a shopping tour for my sister. I never imagined that there was anything to buy in your jaytown.

EVA: You do us a great injustice. We have splendid stores and the latest models direct from Paris.

BELLA: From Paris? I never knew that you German patriots would be the slaves of the modes of France.

EVA: Indeed we are. You remember the verse from our immortal poet, "The German does not love the Frenchman, but gladly drinks his glorious wines." Now, if you will wait here a minute until I get my hat and gloves I will accompany you and show you the glories of our metropolis. Make yourself at home. (*Exit.*)

(*Bella sits down and takes a book pensively.*)

BELLA: So she takes lessons in Latin and music (*sighing*). Lucky girl!

FRANZ (*enters, sees Bella—about to withdraw*): Excuse me, Miss, I—

BELLA: Don't leave, you do not disturb me at all, Mr.—
Mr.—

FRANZ (*smiling*): Franz.

BELLA: So you are the music teacher.

FRANZ (*surprised*): The music teacher? I am the chauffeur, Miss.

BELLA: But you instruct the young lady in music and in Latin—if I am not mistaken.

FRANZ: Oh, those are side issues. My professional occupation, if I may so express myself, is that of the tamer of a bucking automobile.

BELLA: Where do you get all this knowledge from?

FRANZ: I graduated from Heidelberg University *cum laude* and also from the Berlin Conservatory.

BELLA: University, Conservatory! and yet you do menial labor?

FRANZ: You see, Miss, at one time I was very poor. The teachings of universities and conservatories do not fit one for active existence. They are good for the rich. Some weeks ago I was actually starving. I could not earn enough to keep body and soul together. I was in despair. Captain Stamm met me, employed me—nominally as a chauffeur. He was very kind. The family is not rich and could not afford many servants, so I gradually adapted myself to their requirements. I am well treated, the work is not hard, I am satisfied.

BELLA (*archly*): And the daughter of the house?

FRANZ (*interrupting, seriously*): The daughter is a mere child and I am a loyal servant, no more and no less. Excuse me, Miss, I hear Miss Eva. I must clear the table. (*Folds up tablecloth, places it in bureau drawer. Exit.*)

(*Enter Eva, fully dressed.*)

EVA: Here I am. Did I keep you waiting? Were you lonesome?

BELLA (*gushing*): Oh, he is just splendid!

EVA (*looking around in surprise*): What are you talking about?

BELLA: Such a figure! Such a strong face!

EVA (*looking at a picture on the wall*): Are you gushing

about grandfather? I never appreciated his transcendant beauty.

BELLA: And such glorious hair!

EVA (*shaking Bella*): You are dreaming! Wake up! He is perfectly bald (*pointing at picture*).

BELLA (*examining picture attentively*): You don't understand. You are so prosaic. Of course I meant that beautiful expansive dome where his hair ought to be.

EVA (*provoked*): You little fool! The idea of enthusing about a homely old man who has been dead these twenty years. Come along.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE 3

(*Parade ground. A squad of recruits is being exercised by a sergeant.*)

SERGEANT: Left, left, left. Can't you miserable scoundrels keep decent step? One would imagine your feet are made of lead and that the plumber had forgotten to hinge your knees. You red-headed son of a sea cook in the second file, do you think you are handling a pitchfork? Can't you see your gun shed tears and hide her face in shame because you don't know how to handle her? May ten thousand thunderbolts strike the heads of such dolts and miscreants as I have in this squad.

(*Enter Captain.*)

CAPTAIN: Sergeant!

SERGEANT (*saluting*): Sir.

CAPTAIN (*severely*): Sergeant, don't you know any better than to abuse your men? The 50th Rule expressly prohibits any abuse of a private by a non-commissioned officer. You have served long enough to know your rules.

SERGEANT: Yes, sir; but——

CAPTAIN: No but. Rules are made to be obeyed and enforced, and if the non-commissioned officers break them, what can be expected from the privates? These men are human beings like you and I.

SERGEANT: Begging your pardon, sir, I hope not. Why, even monkeys would not think of attending a drill without being properly shaved and having their uniform buttoned, and snakes would feel ashamed if they were unable to march in better step than these fellows.

CAPTAIN: When you come to drill monkeys and snakes you may address them any way you like, but for the present your instructions are to use civil language to your subordinates. This is final.

SERGEANT: Yes, sir. (Exit.)

(*Enter General Von Freiberg. Captain salutes. Salute is answered by General, who is about to pass, but looks at Captain closely and approaches rapidly.*)

GENERAL: Do my eyes deceive me, or is this Captain Stamm?

CAPTAIN (*saluting*): Captain Stamm, at command, General.

GENERAL: Why, Albert, old horse, don't you recognize your schoolfellow, Carl?

CAPTAIN: Is this really you, Carl von Freiberg? I would never have recognized you.

GENERAL: It is fully twenty-five years since we met last. We were then two good-looking young fellows and, if I am permitted to say so, neither of us has improved in looks.

CAPTAIN: Yes, we are growing old.

GENERAL: And what is worse, fat and bald. I didn't know that you were stationed here. How has the world treated you since our last meeting?

CAPTAIN: I am married, have a splendid wife who brought me a small dowery, two fine children, take life easy, and have advanced very slowly in the service, as you may perceive. But how is it that you have made such rapid strides? A general of division at your age without a war!

GENERAL: You have struck it—without a war.

CAPTAIN: Are you still exploiting your peculiar philosophies about peace and brotherly love? You, a soldier.

GENERAL: I am most essentially a man of peace, but I had three essentials which are bound to lead to success in any vocation.

CAPTAIN: They are?

GENERAL (*sententiously*): Push, pull and luck, particularly luck.

CAPTAIN: I do not quite comprehend.

GENERAL: You see, when I started out in life I was bound to succeed somehow or other. I had no means, no talents, and was inclined to be lazy. I adopted a military career as the road of least resistance. A helmet may cover a great area of cerebral vacuity which a civilian's headgear would expose, and the glitter of a uniform to the viewpoint of the populace supplies that vista of gold of which your pockets may be barren. The occupation is pleasant in times of peace and healthful even in war—if you manage to keep well in the rear. I have influential acquaintances, as you know. I am a good student and theoretically became Napoleon Bonaparte and Frederic the Great rolled in one.

CAPTAIN: Theoretically? I fail to understand.

GENERAL: I announced so often that I was as great as Napoleon and Frederic until everybody believed it. They are willing to take me at my own valuation.

CAPTAIN: Oh, I see.

GENERAL: I am really greater than either of them.

CAPTAIN: How is that?—Not that I doubt it for one moment.

GENERAL: They are dead and I manage to keep alive.

CAPTAIN: Of course, the dead are always wrong.

GENERAL: Not always. They are protected by the ancient "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*" as to which there is no synonym applicable to the living—except possibly in the Bible.

CAPTAIN: Go on. I am interested.

GENERAL: My luck, which prevented a war, has saved

me from being found out. I am still one of the greatest generals of all ages without having caused the death of a solitary human being.

CAPTAIN: I see; but if there were a war, how could you reconcile your ideas of brotherly love with your vocation?

GENERAL: That is dead easy—excuse the slang. I hate the slaughter of animals, but I love meat.

CAPTAIN: I do not see the application.

GENERAL: The butcher slaughters the animal without my consent and I eat the animal because it is dead. Thus I please myself and support the butcher. The poor beast would not become alive if I did not eat it, and its disposal by use prevents a useless putrefaction of the carcass; besides which, I assist nature in its course of evolution and hence eventual perfection.

CAPTAIN: This is too deep for me.

GENERAL: It is simple. Death is inevitable. Why? Nature, in its more or less successful attempts to perfect, must needs destroy what it has previously created. The Malthusian theory, if nothing else, would require such destruction, hence when we destroy a sentient being, we aid nature in the speedy accomplishment of a laudable object. From the earliest dawn of history warriors have been the instruments of civilization. They hewed the way to progress. It required a strong arm and a sharp tool. Civilization has its root in the graves of those slain in war.

CAPTAIN: I see a light.

GENERAL: Let me proceed. The saying, A good Indian is a dead Indian, should be extended to other races. Perfection will not be attained until the human race has been exterminated, and, if evolution be an eternal law, nature may build a better civilization out of a defunct humanity. For that reason, while I deem war a somewhat painful, brutal and expensive promotion of an eventual civilization in accordance with natural laws of evolution, yet the end sanctifies the means. The soldier is the natural civilizer, the true altruist and reformer.

CAPTAIN: But where does your brotherly love come in?

GENERAL: Albert, I am surprised at your dullness of understanding. Our friends appreciate us only after we are dead, and we love our enemies when we have killed them. The Golden Rule flourishes in graveyards and on battlefields.

CAPTAIN: Your philosophy is beyond compare; if it is generally adopted, every child will be born with a sword in its hand and you will become generalissimo of all the armies of the world. But what will you do if your war, instead of remaining a mere theory for discussion, should actually happen?

GENERAL: Don't worry, my dear boy; that contingency is not so far off. (*Looking around cautiously*) I feel it in my sword. The blade rattles ominously in its scabbard and the hilt looks up at me appealingly like a child clamoring for the touch of a friendly hand. You know we are in the midst of what are called maneuvers, but really a preparation

for war. That is what brought me here. I am inspector of maneuvers and travel from garrison to garrison. Of course, this is confidential. War must be prepared for gradually, but sprung upon a confiding public suddenly in order to catch their enthusiasm. You see, as civilization advances, armaments must keep pace. We soldiers can't afford to remain old fashioned.

CAPTAIN: Of course not.

GENERAL: As each nation improves its armaments, the other nations not only strive to emulate but to excel. That is in accordance with economic laws of competition. Now, as to articles of daily use or consumption, their improvement is easily demonstrable in the ordinary course of events. Not so as to armaments. Enormous sums are spent by the different governments in the improvement of arms and the discarded guns become mere junk. Now, there comes a time when the peoples are getting restless at the continuous expenditure of their money for products which appear to be entirely useless, and we are bound to demonstrate by their effective use that the money has not been wasted.

CAPTAIN: How wonderful! According to you, to exterminate and be exterminated is merely an enjoyable incident in the march of civilization.

GENERAL: Not pleasant, but most effective. But to continue: The new armament is put to use, shows its effectiveness, and is destroyed in activity. The populace has an ocular demonstration of the proper application of its money and is pleased to spend

larger sums in the renewal of munitions which have been destroyed. We commence anew building upon the improvements of the past. Thus we progress to kill and kill to progress; again directly in accord with principles of evolution. Do you see?

CAPTAIN: It is perfectly plain. I can't see how any reasonable person can possibly object to war after hearing you explain its necessity and making it so attractive.

GENERAL: Of course all this is known to the General Staff, but must be kept from the knowledge of the rabble, until everything is ripe for action. Soldiering is an easy way of living and we don't like to lose our jobs by educating others.

CAPTAIN: I see. But how about the personal equation. You acknowledge yourself eminently a man of peace.

GENERAL: True, but my philosophy, while intended for piping times of peace, is most elastic and can be expanded to meet any emergency.

CAPTAIN: Please explain.

GENERAL: I rely upon the "Gold Dust Twins."

CAPTAIN: The "Gold Dust Twins"? Who are they?

GENERAL: Pluck and bluff. The one glitters, the other blinds. I may be a fat philosopher, but I am not a poltroon, and, right or wrong, stand by my country, which has nurtured and fattened me. Every pound of my philosophy is mixed with a few grains of common sense. I am the cog of a piece of machinery intended for destruction as a means of civilization, as I have explained. I must

be either strong enough to withstand the pressure of my surrounding cogs and cams, or I will be broken, to be replaced by an improved device. I must do my duty in order to exist, or give the appearance of doing my duty, so that my actual inefficiency should not become apparent; the former is pluck, the latter is bluff. I incline in both directions and thus have a decided advantage above others. I push forward where others might hold back.

CAPTAIN: As a combination of philosopher and soldier you are a perfect marvel.

GENERAL: Let me continue. An invasion into a neighboring country is required as a politico-economic necessity, with which I have no concern. The taking of a fortress becomes a strategic necessity. The General Staff demands its investment. I merely obey that behest. If I did not, some one would, perhaps not so well. I give my commands to subordinates and the fort is taken at great loss of life. The ensuing slaughter is not a fault of mine, but is the result of a combination of natural laws of gravitation, repulsion, cohesion, capillary attraction and what not, for which I am not to blame. Personally I would have much preferred to take the fort amid a shower of roses and confetti.

CAPTAIN: Bravo, Carl! With the application of your practical altruism you are bound to become one of our most distinguished generals and to return from the war covered with glory and crowned with a halo of sanctity, after causing an amount of carnage, the mere contemplation whereof would make us ordinary mortals shiver in our boots.

(The sound of trumpets is heard.)

GENERAL: The maneuvers have commenced. To horse, to horse! By leading our men in time of peace we must teach them to advance in time of war when we prod them in the rear.

ACT II

SCENE 1

(Eugene's studio in mansion of Constance. Eugene discovered at easel, painting.)

EUGENE: Only a few months more and I will have passed my examination and then home to my parents, to Eva—dear little Eva and to the fond recollections of my youth. How strangely my heart is divided between the recollections of my modest German home and the distractions of this gay Paris which has become my foster mother and the beautiful Versailles. Will I ever be satisfied in staid Metz? Will I be able to settle down to civil life after the glitter of my military schooling? Who knows?

(Enter Constance.)

CONSTANCE: Why, Eugene!—still in your workday clothes and painting, always painting. Even during your vacation.

EUGENE: I love painting. It will be my future occupation.

CONSTANCE *(excited)*: There you go again. I promised myself a great military career for you. I want to

see you covered with gold, a sabre in your hand, mounted on a beautiful Arab horse, leading a brave regiment, but you will stick to common commercial pursuits.

EUGENE: Dear aunt, art is not common, painting is not commercial. I entered the military school because you insisted. I did my full duty, as you well know. I am at the head of the class, but what is a soldier's life in peace? A waste of time, energy and opportunity. He does not produce. At his best or his worst he can only destroy. Art is elevating, militancy is debasing. No, my dearest, you cannot make a military man of me; it is not in me.

CONSTANCE: Ah, Eugene, you will return to your cold Germany, forget dear Paris, hate my France, and cease to love me. (*She hides her head on his shoulder.*)

EUGENE (*placing an arm around her waist*): Never, dear heart. To your kindness and care I owe the best years of my life. Whatever my future life may be, wherever I may roam, you will have a supreme place in my heart. There I have erected a shrine devoted to you, only to you, which no other memory will ever be permitted to enter (*kisses her hand*).

CONSTANCE: I know, dear child. For whatever I may have done for you, your love has compensated me a thousandfold. (*Looking around.*) You expected some friends to-night. A little celebration. I have taken the liberty of inviting a friend, Captain Hoche. You have no objection?

EUGENE (*bowing*): Madam, your friends are mine, be-

sides I have a bowing acquaintance with Captain Hoche and he appears to be a splendid fellow.

CONSTANCE: Why, look at your room. Such disorder. Nothing prepared and our guests may arrive any minute. Now go upstairs and dress in uniform (*as he makes a negative sign*) to please me, Eugene. I know you like your comfort, but I love to see you in regimentals. (*Exit Eugene. She follows him to stairway and shouts:*) Your best uniform, Eugene, do you hear? (*Looks around furtively and rushes to telephone.*) Central, central, the War Department. Quick! (*Listening.*) You dare not connect me with the War Department? You must! Call up General Jourdan and tell him Constance and Fealty calls. He will respond. (*Listening.*) Is this you, General? Oh, his secretary. Please tell General Jourdan that Constance and Fealty wants to speak to him. (*Listening.*) Yes, this is Constance. Has war been declared? (*Listening.*) Yes, not yet public. You know my desires about Eugene. Is the coup prepared? I fear his stubborn Germanism and love for the Stamm family. It will be hard to persuade him. What? (*Listening.*) None could resist my persuasion? Thank you, but this is no time for compliments, however gallant. Will Hoche be on hand? (*Listening.*) Well, let us hope for the best. We must and will save that dear soul for France. (*Drops telephone, rings bell.*)

(*Enter Jean.*)

JEAN: Madam has called?

CONSTANCE: Now, Jean, this room must be made presentable. Company will arrive presently. (*They*

arrange things.) Bring in ice, claret, brandy, and don't forget cigars and cigarettes; also cards and chips and, Jean, remove these reminders of peace (*pointing to easel and painting materials*).

(*Jean has brought in articles, disposed of them, removed the easel, etc., and re-enters, announcing:*)

JEAN: Captain Hoche.

CONSTANCE (*meeting Hoche and offering her hand, which he kisses*): Good evening, dear friend.

HOCHE: I lay myself at your feet.

CONSTANCE: Perhaps to be stepped on, how imprudent.

HOCHE: To be stepped on by you would be supreme pleasure. The tread of an angel.

CONSTANCE: How *charmant*, Captain; but let us waive gallantry and attend to business. Did the General inform you?

HOCHE: He assured me that everything is prepared.

CONSTANCE: So war has been declared?

HOCHE: It was inevitable.

CONSTANCE (*sighing*): How sad.

HOCHE: But we rejoice, Madam.

CONSTANCE: You impetuous young officers, you rejoice in capturing our hearts in peace and breaking them in war.

(*Enter Jean.*)

JEAN: Monsieur de la Rue.

(*Enter de la Rue.*)

CONSTANCE: Good evening, de la Rue. You are in time.

DE LA RUE (*kisses her hand*): Madam, time has wings of lead when I expect to meet you.

CONSTANCE (*laughing*): Listen to the little flatterer. I declare, there are no children in these decadent days. (*To Hoche*) Captain, permit me to introduce to you Mr. de la Rue, Eugene's classmate and a future Marshal of France.

(Other young men are announced, arrive, and are introduced. The conversation becomes general. Eventually Constance approaches stairs and calls up.)

CONSTANCE: Eugene, where are you, your friends have congregated.

(Eugene appears in the full uniform of a military student and is greeted by the company.)

CONSTANCE (*introducing Eugene to Hoche*): Captain, you have met my nephew. You two soldiers of France will like each other. (*To Eugene*) The Captain graduated of St. Cyr and you will be able to exchange experiences. (*To company*) And now, young gentlemen, since your host has arrived, it is time for me to retire. An old woman does not fit into the company of gallant youngsters who may desire to regale each other with the recital of their female conquests. So, good-night, much enjoyment, and au revoir. (*Exit.*)

(The company disposes itself around the table, refreshments and cigars are served and desultory conversation ensues.)

EUGENE: Who will join a game of baccarat?

ENSEMBLE: I, Good for you, etc.

(The table is cleared, chips distributed, cards dealt, and the game proceeds for a short time, while wine, champagne and liqueurs are indulged in.)

DE LA RUE (*laying down his cards*): Boys, I do not know what is the matter with me. I do not feel like playing cards. There is an oppressive feeling of some terrible calamity.

A GUEST: It is warm and oppressive. There is a portend of something serious in the air.

EUGENE: Isn't it strange, I have the same feeling. It is as if we were all doomed to die.

HOCHE: Nonsense. Don't give vent to such stupid notions. Here, drink and be merry, even if to-morrow you must die. (*He motions to Jean to fill the glasses. Jean exit.*) Here is to a merry life to-day and a glorious death—whenever it may be.

(They clink glasses. Enter Jean.)

JEAN (*excited, handing Eugene a letter*): A soldier brought it.

EUGENE (*examining envelope*): From the War Department, addressed to me. That is strange. (*Opens and glances at letter and jumps up, surprised. Reads:*) "In consideration of the exemplary conduct and high standing of Eugene Stamm, he is relieved from final examination and has been appointed first lieutenant in the Twentieth Regiment of Chasseurs."

(All congregate around Eugene and shake his hand, congratulating him.)

DE LA RUE: You lucky dog, and I will have to sweat another six months before I can even sniff at a second lieutenancy.

HOCHE: Did you say the Twentieth Regiment? Why, my dear boy, how strange. That's my regiment. (*Embracing him.*) Brother in arms, we will fight side by side——

EUGENE (*dazed*): Why should I be appointed? I am not a soldier at heart. And, listen, I am to report at the war department to-morrow to be assigned to service. That can only mean——

JEAN (*entering, excited*): War, gentlemen! War has been declared. The army is mobilizing. The reserves are called in. They are marching to Berlin. I am off to my regiment!

(*All, in great turmoil, make hasty exit, except Hoche, who places his arm affectionately around Eugene's neck.*)

HOCHE: Brother, do not fail us. I expect to meet you at the Barracks to-morrow. Courage, my boy. I know you are a man of peace, but those make the best soldiers when forced to fight. (*Smiling.*) I see the time near when you will be a hero thirsting for blood and glory. Good-night, my boy. (*Exit.*)

EUGENE (*walking up and down, reflective*): So the unexpected has happened. When I so gleefully joined the military academy, urged by my dear foster-mother, attracted by military glitter, who could have foreseen that I should ever be called upon to go to war—a war against my native country, war without rhyme or reason? Of course, my sympathies are

with the French. German by the accident of birth, I owe that country no gratitude, and yet my father and Eva—poor dear Eva. It will break their hearts. I cannot—I will not! I must resign. (*Proceeds to writing desk, but perceives Constance, who has silently entered.*) Aunt Constance, are you still awake?

CONSTANCE: Yes, my boy. I could not sleep while I knew you to be in trouble.

EUGENE: Do you know?

CONSTANCE: I know all. I could not help listening.

EUGENE: I cannot go to war. I will resign.

CONSTANCE (*hiding her face in her hands*): Coward! And this is the child that I fostered and reared.

EUGENE (*proceeds toward her, uncovers her face*): Dearest, you do not believe that I am afraid of death?

CONSTANCE (*embracing him*): No, no, my Eugene. I know you are brave. Forgive your foolish aunt. I know your dilemma. I feel your mental agony.

EUGENE: I am a born German.

CONSTANCE: Your heart is French.

EUGENE: My home, my family——

CONSTANCE: Your home is here and war knows no family. See, Eugene, Germany may be your place of birth, but France has educated you; its soil has nourished you; its schools have taught you; its government has honored you. I am willing to sacrifice you, the dearest treasure on earth, for France—my country.

(The strains of the Marseillaise are heard in the distance. Constance hurries to window.)

CONSTANCE: Listen to the strains of liberty; they lure you to action.

EUGENE: Siren!

CONSTANCE: A regiment approaches. See the flags of France *(drawing him to window)*. It is the Twentieth Chasseurs—your regiment. The Colonel salutes, the banners are waving to us. There is your friend, Captain Hoche—he beckons. *(She takes a sword; presses it into his hand.)* Here is your sword, Eugene. Wield it for the honor of France and love of me.

EUGENE *(waving sword)*: I will, Constance dear, for you!

CONSTANCE *(embracing him)*: I knew it, my boy, my dear boy!

(As the scene changes the strains of the Marseillaise continue in the distance.)

SCENE 2

(Sitting room of Captain Stamm. Enter Captain Stamm, somewhat exhilarated, followed by Franz.)

CAPTAIN: So it's war, Franz. Do you hear?—war!

FRANZ: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN: You don't seem to be pleased?

FRANZ: I am not.

CAPTAIN: What's the matter with you?

FRANZ: War is either an unpleasant necessity or a savage luxury. I do not need it and do not enjoy it.

CAPTAIN: Be this as it may, you will have to serve.

FRANZ: I know, Captain, and I intend to do my full duty, whether I like the job or not.

CAPTAIN: You belong to the reserve?

FRANZ: Twelfth Regiment Uhlans.

CAPTAIN: Have you been called to the colors yet?

FRANZ: Not yet, but I expect the notice every day.

CAPTAIN: Well, my regiment is under marching order. Is my knapsack packed?

FRANZ: Everything ready.

CAPTAIN: I am glad we are going into action at last. I was dying here of the dry rot of inactivity (*draws sword*). The sword is clean and sharp, but (*rubbing his arm*) the arm is rather rusty. (*He makes cuts and stabs with the sword.*) This will do for a Frenchman or two. How about my revolvers?

FRANZ: Ready and loaded. Each fit to dispose of five lives.

CAPTAIN: Very good. Take my luggage to the Barracks. Where is my wife?

FRANZ: Downstairs in the kitchen. She insisted upon preparing a last meal, before your departure, with her own hands. It is to be served in the dining room.

CAPTAIN: I cannot wait. I have only just breakfasted. These women are so fussy.

FRANZ (*sarcastic*): About a little matter like a war.
 (*Aside*) And these men are so callous about a little matter like a woman's heart. (*Exit.*)

CAPTAIN (*opening door, calls*): Triene, Triene, where are you?

MRS. STAMM (*outside*): I am coming. (*Enters with tear-stained cheeks, handkerchief to eyes. Runs to Capt. Stamm, embraces and kisses him.*) And must you go, and I may never see you again?

CAPTAIN: Oh, come, now, no tears. This is not the conduct of a soldier's wife.

MRS. STAMM: I know. I blame myself. My head says to rejoice that my husband is going to harvest laurels on the field of battle, but the heart cannot be argued with, and trembles and doubts and fears. Oh, Albert, you are sure you will return to me?

CAPTAIN: Foolish girl! Of course I will. War is my business. For more than thirty years have I been waiting for an opportunity to distinguish myself. To throw off the lethargy of garrison life. To obtain advancement. And when my fondest hopes are being fulfilled would you begrudge me the chance?

MRS. STAMM: I know I should not.

CAPTAIN: When you married me did you not anticipate this very hour?

MRS. STAMM: Too true. I did dread this very hour. For years after our marriage I would dream of war and slaughter. I saw the battlefield strewn with the dead, glassy eyes staring toward the moon, with shattered limbs and gaping wounds; and I heard the

sound of funeral dirges around and the moans of the dying and the cry of despair of women all dressed in black, who were roaming about that graveyard, looking for their beloved dead—and there, right on top of that writhing heap of maimed humanity, I saw the form of my husband, his breast torn open by a shell and his life slowly ebbing away.

CAPTAIN (*moved*): Don't give way, dearest. You unnerve me.

MRS. STAMM: And I awoke with a scream and hurried to your room to see whether you were there, and I saw you with your eyes shut in the pale light of the moon, as if you were dead, and I felt your dear face and when I felt you stir I sank down by your bed with tears streaming down my face, and sent up a prayer of thanks that you were still spared to me.

CAPTAIN (*wiping his eyes*): Poor Triene, and I knew nothing at all about this.

MRS. STAMM: A soldier's wife! And this occurred night after night. But as the years passed on and you stayed by my side, and day passed after day uneventfully and peacefully, I was transported into a fool's paradise. I thought your soldiering was merely play. I looked upon your uniform as a mere ornament and considered your sword a toy. And now, tell me, do I dream? Are you really going from me into that place of carnage? Will you be one of those shattered remains of humanity? (*Hysterically:*) Albert, Albert, wake me! (*Sinks into his arms, moaning.*)

CAPTAIN: Dear, have courage. I will return.

MRS. STAMM : Eugene, my God, Eugene!

CAPTAIN : Yes, I almost forgot about him. Of course he will have to serve.

MRS. STAMM : In the German army? Oh, God, how you punish me for my transgressions.

CAPTAIN (*surprised*) : I don't understand you, Triene. Of course he will serve in our Army. He is a German and my son. He will do his duty and I expect great things from him. I know how you natives of Lorraine feel about this war, but after all you are the wife of a German soldier and the mother of a native German.

MRS. STAMM (*aside*) : The mother of a German.

CAPTAIN : Of course this will temporarily interfere with his artistic career. You are to be sympathized with for having both a husband and a son exposed to the perils of war, but it is inevitable and other women have to bear similar afflictions.

MRS. STAMM : You are right; it is an unavoidable misfortune.

CAPTAIN : I will telegraph him to-day. Calm yourself. I hear Eva. The poor child must not be troubled.

(*Enter Eva, followed by Franz.*)

EVA : Papa, dear, are you really going to war? How jolly!

CAPTAIN : I am glad to have your sympathetic support, at all events.

EVA : And you will come back a General on a big black horse, your breast covered with decorations.

FRANZ (*aside*): Foolish child! he may return on a stretcher, his body covered with wounds!

CAPTAIN (*pointing at Mrs. Stamm and Franz*): These black ravens do their best to discourage me.

EVA (*to Franz*): What, Franz! I am surprised. How dare you interfere with my father's business, you old woman?

FRANZ: I am not so *very* old.

EVA (*to Captain Stamm*): Never mind, Father. I stand by you. I am a true patriot and in favor of this war. We must crush the Frenchmen and the French women. Particularly the French women. How I hate them!

MRS. STAMM: Eva, how can you be so cruel?

EVA: I am German, heart and soul, Mother. I wished I was a boy, that I could shoulder a gun and fight at father's side.

CAPTAIN: Eva, come to my arms! You are a true daughter of mine and of your Fatherland. I am proud of you (*embraces her*). (*To Franz*:) Is the machine ready? I must be off.

MRS. STAMM (*agitated*): I prepared dinner for you. The dishes you like. Who knows when we will dine together again?

EVA (*sniffing*): *Sauerbraten und Kartoffel Kloesse!* I can smell it. It makes me feel hungry.

CAPTAIN: I am sorry. I have no time. We'll feast when I return.

FRANZ (*aside*): If you return.

CAPTAIN (*moved, embracing wife and Eva*): Good-bye, my dears. I fight for my God, my country and my Kaiser!

EVA: Come back a hero and a conqueror. My heart goes with you.

MRS. STAMM (*sinking on her knees*): Good God prosper the just cause, preserve my dear husband, and do not let the innocents suffer for my guilt.

ACT III

SCENE 1

(*The same room.*)

MRS. STAMM (*dejected and in tears*): Poor dear husband, poor Eugene! Who could foresee this terrible war?

(*Eva and Bella enter in deep discussion. Mrs. Stamm attempts to hide her tears.*)

EVA: Mama, do you know that Bella is going to leave us?

MRS. STAMM: I am so sorry. Bella, dear, I have learned to love you like a daughter, but, of course——

BELLA (*interrupting*): My parents think that Metz is so near the frontier that it is unsafe for me to stay, and have ordered me home. And I felt so much at home among you, but I must obey. Besides, I can't stand the noise of cannons. I get so frightened at thunder and lightning.

MRS. STAMM: I understand and fully approve the caution of your parents. Of course we inhabitants of a garrison city feel different. When do you expect to leave?

BELLA: Oh, within a day or two. I hope the Frenchmen will not take the town before that.

MRS. STAMM (*smiling*): Child, be perfectly assured that nothing will hurt you. Metz is almost impregnable, and the French would have a hard time in investing the city. Girls, I will let you spend your last days in each other's company. It may be a long time before you meet again. (*Exit.*)

EVA: Did you see it? Did you notice the tears which she attempted to hide?

BELLA: Of course your mother feels bad on account of your father's absence.

EVA: Don't you believe it. Mama is a soldier's wife and as courageous as any woman I ever met. But during the last few days she has been entirely changed. Nothing but tears and sighs. I tell you it is not because of father, but Eugene.

BELLA: You surprise me.

EVA: Yes, there is an awful skeleton in our family closet and I am going to dig it out.

BELLA: How interesting! But don't expose your family secrets to a stranger.

EVA: You are not a stranger. You are more like a sister. I have no secrets from you.

BELLA: Well, if it relieves you, tell me your troubles. I may be able to help you out.

EVA: You see, Eugene is a great artist. Years ago Mama insisted that it would be necessary for him to attend school in Paris, and our Aunt Constance was willing to take care of him. He went to Paris.

BELLA: I see.

EVA: No, you don't. Instead of attending to the study of art, Eugene was permitted to attend at a military school, and since father might have been opposed to his imbibing French tactics, that was kept secret from him and I am in the secret.

BELLA: How dreadful! Oh, Eva, how could you keep a secret and such an interesting one?

EVA: I did keep it, so as not to get poor Mama into trouble.

BELLA: I understand.

EVA: Of course, the fact that Eugene studied military tactics is nothing against him. On the contrary, he knows more now than all our generals taken in a bunch, and we being German patriots, he would be only too pleased to hoist the Frenchmen by their own petard in using against them the knowledge which he acquired at their expense.

BELLA: Of course.

EVA: He would be made a major or a colonel right away, and perhaps become a member of the General Staff.

BELLA: Without a possible doubt. Being your brother, they should make him a general and confer upon him the Iron Cross.

EVA: That is what I told Mama, but she only shook her head and shed a whole ocean of tears.

BELLA: How strange!

EVA: Well, there is something very mysterious about the matter and Mama is somehow implicated.

BELLA: You don't say?

EVA: And Aunt Constance is at the bottom of it.

BELLA: Your aunt?

EVA: Yes, my aunt, the old coquette.

BELLA: How can you talk so about your poor aunt?

EVA: Poor aunt, nothing! She is tremendously rich.

BELLA: Well, that is nothing against her.

EVA: You know my aunt is—well—very good looking.

BELLA: You don't envy her good looks. It seems to be a family trait.

EVA: No, no, child. You don't understand these things. An old good-looking woman on one hand and a poor unprotected boy on the other.

BELLA: Oh, you suspect—

EVA: I do not suspect—I know. She has designs on poor brother.

BELLA: How romantic!

EVA: The romance of the sly cat and the unsophisticated mouse. She will swallow the poor mouse.

BELLA: What is to be done about it?

EVA: I am going to rescue him.

BELLA: You mean you are going to invade Paris and forcibly carry your brother through the French lines into Germany?

EVA: Why no. Eugene is not in Paris. He is quite near.

BELLA: You surprise me. The plot is growing so dense I can't see through it.

EVA: You know Chateau d'Un on the Orne. A beautiful place—considered one of the show places of France.

BELLA: I believe I have heard of it. What about it?

EVA: Aunt Constance owns it.

BELLA: How lovely! But what has your poor brother to do with the chateau?

EVA: He is there.

BELLA: Really, you don't say! But how do you know?

EVA: I wheedled it out of Mama. She is entirely under the dominion of her sister. But I am as sly as they are. Oh, I am a born diplomat.

BELLA: I see that you are, and you have undertaken a serious mission. Let me hear the particulars.

EVA: You know Aunt Constance was married before. I don't know how many times, but she is a female Bluebeard.

BELLA: My goodness!

EVA: In her chateau she has a room which is always locked and where she keeps the bodies of her defunct husbands.

BELLA: Eva, you frighten me! I won't be able to sleep to-night.

EVA: You know the chateau is in France. Why doesn't

Eugene cross into Germany? Why doesn't he come back to his country and his family?

BELLA: It seems rather remarkable, being so near.

EVA: I tell you why. She has abducted the poor child and keeps him imprisoned in the deepest dungeon of her castle until he will consent to marry her. The ancient cradle snatcher!

BELLA: That seems quite plausible, Eva. I am surprised at your perspicuity.

EVA: It is not per—per—the big word you used. It is intuition.

BELLA: Yes, I understand. You and your brother always loved each other very dearly.

EVA: Yes, we did, and I hardly dare to think what will become of him after that marriage.

BELLA: Well?

EVA: He will join the procession of her former husbands (*sobbing*), and his dismembered remains will adorn some niche of that accursed room!

BELLA (*crying*): Don't talk that way, you make the shivers run up and down my back.

EVA: But I will balk her nefarious schemes. I will rescue Eugene from the net of that French spider.

BELLA: Good! But how are you going to do it?

EVA: Oh, I will find some way.

BELLA: How can you get there? The railroads are blocked by the military. No trains are running beyond the frontier. How will you manage?

EVA: I will get there if I have to crawl on all fours!
And let me once meet Constance, the charming cat!
I will make her fur fly!

(*Enter Franz in uniform of a Sergeant of Uhlans.*)

EVA: Why, Franz, in a uniform! So you are going to fight for your country and I called you an old woman?

FRANZ (*smiling*): Necessity compelled me to become a militant suffragette. I belong to the reserve and was called to arms.

BELLA: He looks like General Boum in the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein. (*Salutes*) I salute you, General. (*Singing:*) "I love the military. I love the military."

EVA: The color of the uniform fits his complexion splendidly.

BELLA: It is a fashionable gray. I told you split skirts are going out of style. They wear their—ahem!—trousers now exposed and unashamed. (*They turn Franz around.*) The waist fits well in the back. What corsets do you wear, General?

EVA: Don't you think the—ah—lower garment is cut rather wide at the top and narrow in the calfs?

BELLA: That is the latest Parisian style, but I think there should be ruffles at the top of the booties.

EVA: No, Bella, they wear lace exclusively. And look, he has spurs. Franz, aren't you afraid that you will make the machine balk?—besides, I consider the use of spurs upon an automobile an unnecessarily cruel method of propulsion. Don't you, Bella?

FRANZ: Ladies, have your fling at me. It won't last long. I have come to say my adieus.

EVA: Franz, are you going to leave so suddenly? How sad! We hate to lose you. Don't we, Bella?

BELLA: Mr. Franz was your exclusive property. I never owned him and cannot lose him.

EVA: When must you go and where are you bound for?

FRANZ: I must report at the general headquarters near the border of Luxemburg. I leave this evening.

EVA: You will have tea with us before you leave. You have ceased to be a servitor and are now father's comrade, whom we are pleased to honor.

FRANZ: A mere sergeant and your father an officer.

EVA: Franz, don't be stupid. You know we are not stuck up and have never considered you as merely a servant, but more as a friend. (*Archly to Bella:*) Isn't he our dear friend, Bella?

BELLA: Mr. Franz has always been kind and courteous. I shall be only too proud to call him a friend under any circumstance and in any condition.

FRANZ: Thank you, ladies. My experiences in this house and the remembrance of your kindness will be among my most precious recollections. May I speak to your mama, Miss Eva?

EVA: I will call her. (*Calls:*) Mama, Franz is here and wants to speak to you.

MRS. STAMM (*outside*): I am coming. (*Enters.*) Why, Franz, I am pleased to see you in your country's uniform. I knew you would not stay behind.

FRANZ: I thank Madam for her good opinion of me, which I fully appreciate.

MRS. STAMM: Of course we hate to lose you. You have been considered a member of the family and (*breaking down*), oh, this terrible war! How it has broken up family and home ties and changed every condition of life.

FRANZ: Dear Madam (*kisses her hand*), I feel as if I were leaving a mother. Our hearts break, but what can we do? We are in the throes of a terrible current and must swim or sink with the flow of the tide.

MRS. STAMM: When must you leave?

FRANZ: Only this evening. I have several hours to spare.

MRS. STAMM: You will join us at our evening meal. I will see to it that you get off in time.

FRANZ: I am sorry to inform you that your automobile has been requisitioned for military uses. Here is the order (*offering paper which Mrs. Stamm waves aside.*)

MRS. STAMM: It needs no official order. Since I am willing to sacrifice my husband to the Fatherland, it is welcome to anything else that I possess.

FRANZ: I thank you in the name of our country. The machine is in the garage, loaded with baggage, which I am ordered to deliver at headquarters.

MRS. STAMM: Very well. Excuse me, I want to attend to some household details so that you may not be delayed. We will meet later. (*Exit.*)

EVA: So you have taken our automobile, and when we want to ride we will have to walk.

FRANZ: I am very sorry, but the exigencies of war——

EVA: No matter. Good riddance to the old rattletrap. I am only afraid that it will blow up some day and hurt some of our officers. I consider it elementarily an engine of torture in peace and of destruction in war, and always dangerous to those who handle it.

FRANZ: It is to be used only for the carrying of amunitions and war material. It is now filled with a lot of rubbish for headquarters; if the load were valuable it would not be entrusted to one man, unarmed and on the road so near to the border.

EVA: So you are taking it to Luneville on the highway along the frontier?

FRANZ: Of course. It is the only tolerably decent road, but I will be very careful not to cross the border. While no French soldiers have been reported in the neighborhood, one can never say what French peasants may do with a German automobile, and I would not want them to capture the impedimenta of our staff. They might use them roughly, to say nothing of my skin, which is of some value—to me.

EVA (*reflectively*): I understand. You know the Chateau d'Un?

FRANZ: The beautiful estate of your aunt? Of course, it is right near the highway on French territory. We used to drive out there. Your poor aunt! Her property will be badly used by both armies, being so near the scene of war.

EVA: Don't you pity my aunt. She deserves no sympathy. I wish they would bombard her castle and level it with the ground.

FRANZ (*surprised*): Why, Miss Eva! How you talk! Of course she is French, but that is no reason why you should hate her.

EVA: Never mind. I have my reasons. You say the machine is in the garage, packed and ready to proceed?

FRANZ: Certainly. All I need to do is to jump on and off we go.

EVA: Very well. I don't want to detain you. You will have a lot of things to attend to. Au revoir.

BELLA (*tearfully*): And I will see you again before you go off to be wounded and killed by those terrible Frenchmen.

FRANZ: Don't take it to heart, Miss Bella. I am all right and fully able to take care of myself. I will meet you at the supper table. Good-bye for the present. (*Exit.*)

EVA (*clapping her hands*): Oh, Bella, I have it! I'm going to see Eugene and help him to escape.

BELLA: How are you going to do it?

EVA: I am going with Franz.

BELLA: What, at night?

EVA: Oh, it will be glorious moonlight.

BELLA: On a lonely road with a young man?

EVA: Franz is not a man; he is a soldier.

BELLA: I don't comprehend the distinction. It would be absolutely indecent.

EVA: This is a time of war, which causes a suspension of propriety and a moratorium of decency.

BELLA: But Franz won't take you.

EVA: I know he won't. I am going without his consent.

BELLA: How will you manage it?

EVA: I am going to hide in the automobile. I assume it is pretty well filled with rubbish, but I know the secret passages of our old machine and will manage to squeeze in.

BELLA: Squeeze in with skirts and all?

EVA: Not a bit. I am going to dress as a boy. There are any number of brother's suits upstairs. I have tried them on over and over again. They fit me nicely. I make the dearest boy you ever saw.

BELLA: I always know you for a tomboy, but I never thought you capable of such escapades.

EVA: Desperate emergencies demand desperate measures. I think I can hear my brother call for help from the depth of his subterranean dungeon. I will not fail him. I count upon it that you will not betray me. I am off to prepare.

BELLA (*aside*): A moonlight night, a young man on a lonely road, a suspension of proprieties. No, you won't. (*Aloud*;) Eva, take me along.

EVA: What will I do with you, you timid little mouse?

BELLA: Oh, I am strong, if I am little. I can help you

carry your poor broter if he should be too weak to walk or—should resist.

EVA: You will be jolly company and take up no room. I can put you in a suit case and take you along as baggage. Come on, we have no time to lose.

SCENE 2

(Moonlight night, road in the woods with vista of a chateau and river, a stalled automobile, under which Franz is discovered making repairs.)

FRANZ: This damned old junk heap! I wish the infernal thing would tumble down some mountain and break its goldarned legs! May the devil fly away with it. It would make a splendid aeroplane in hell!

(The heads of Eva and Bella appear above tonneau and they converse in whispers.)

BELLA: How shocking! I declare your Franz can swear.

EVA: Like a trooper. It shows that he knows his business.

FRANZ: *Himmel Kreuz donnerwetter!*

BELLA: Such language, and in the presense of ladies!

EVA: My dear, let me call your attention to three important considerations which you do not seem to recognize. First of all, war is the mother of impropriety and the grandmother of indecency; secondly, we are not ladies, but young men—regular sports; thirdly, since Franz is unaware of our presence it is permissible for him to swear and for us to listen.

FRANZ: *Sacre mon de dieu! Mille tonnere!*

EVA: Listen! Franz, having exhausted all the cuss words of his native tongue, has adopted the cussdom of the enemy. It speaks well for his ingenuity, but reflects upon his patriotism. He should confine himself to the consumption of home products.

FRANZ: I can't get that wretched screw tight. *Car-ramba!*

EVA: Do you hear? He is going through the dictionary of all countries, and is bound to make a splendid record as a soldier. He will soon have exhausted the cusswords of all languages, and I expect him to produce something entirely new. I like originality.

BELLA: I am surprised that you take it so calmly. I am disappointed in Franz.

EVA: Do you know, there is nothing so soothing as a string of good swear words?

BELLA: Stop, Naughty!

EVA: You see, it is the finishing touch of a man. Just like drink and tobacco. We don't love the scent, but a man seems incomplete without his beer and pipe. We have become so accustomed to these things in him that their absence makes him appear effeminate.

FRANZ: If the captain had a grain of common sense he would have thrown this old junk on the ash heap long ago.

BELLA: He is speaking of your father. Don't you feel offended?

EVA: Not a bit. Poor Pa is merely a captain. He studied his strategy and his articles of war and

rules of conduct. He is not bound to think for himself, but merely to execute the commands of his superiors. He does not need to think. All the intelligence is centered in the General Staff and the superior officers. The others are machines. My poor father will become intelligent when he gets to be a general. You know the proverb, Whom God grants an office to him he gives intelligence to fill it.

BELLA: Listen! What is the noise?

EVA: Good Lord! soldiers are coming. It must be the French army. Let us hide. (*They hide in tonneau.*)

FRANZ (*coming from under auto*): I hear the approach of soldiers. It must be a patrol of our own men. (*Aloud:*) Who goes?

VOICE OUTSIDE GRAND ROUNDS: Halt, who is there?
(*Enter Captain Stamm and Orderly. Franz stands at salute.*)

CAPT. STAMM: What have we here?

FRANZ: Sergeant, Reserve Uhlans.

CAPTAIN: Bound where?

FRANZ: Division staff at Luneville.

CAPTAIN: With an automobile?

FRANZ: Requisitioned. Filled with supplies.

CAPTAIN: Orderly, bring a lantern so that we can inspect the machine.

(*Orderly salutes and produces a lantern.*)

CAPTAIN (*looks at Franz*): Why, Franz, is that you and ready for action?

FRANZ: Always ready.

CAPTAIN: And a sergeant. You must have done well to obtain that grade.

FRANZ: I did my duty once, sir, and I am willing to do it again.

CAPTAIN: Good, my boy; you will get along in the army.
(*Inspects automobile.*) Isn't that my machine?

FRANZ: Yes, sir. Requisitioned by the General Staff.

CAPTAIN (*aside*): There you have it. The generals will ride around in my machine while I am compelled to carry my corporation in the sweat of my brow. Even war is not what it is cracked up to be.
(*Aloud*): What have you in the automobile, sergeant?

FRANZ: Merely some baggage for the officers of the staff at Luneville, which I am ordered to deliver, sir.

CAPTAIN: That reminds me that we that we have some mail for distribution at headquarters. Have you room in the machine to carry it?

FRANZ: Plenty, sir.

CAPTAIN: Orderly, just put the mail bag into the machine. It will relieve us of unnecessary luggage.

(*Orderly and soldier carry heavy mailbag, which they throw into the automobile.*)

EVA (*from the automobile*): Ouch!

ORDERLY (*surprised*): What is that?

CAPTAIN: A spy. Orderly, search the tonneau.

(*Orderly is about to search when Eva appears, pushes him from steps and climbs out.*)

EVA: You brute, you hurt me! (*Rubs her head.*)

CAPTAIN: Why, who is this? Quick, the light! (*Takes lantern and looks at Eva.*) Eva, what are you doing here and in disguise?

EVA (*calmly*): It was a beautiful moonlight night and I thought I would take a ride to Luneville to inspect the General's headquarters.

CAPTAIN: You did, you naughty girl? Well, you'll go right back, and under proper chaperonage! (*Calls out:*) First file front! (*Two soldiers march up.*) Take him—her—it to the rear to be handed into the custody of a sensible and strong-fisted woman at the first farmhouse you strike; have her kept there until my return. (*To Eva:*) As for you, young man, you will be court-martialed and shot at sunrise.

EVA (*pretending to faint, falls into the arms of Franz*): Ach, Franz!

CAPTAIN (*pulls her away*): None of this, you shameless girl! Come, kiss me and then off you go.

(*Eva kisses Captain Stamm, then exit with soldiers.*)

CAPTAIN (*approaches Franz with clenched fists as if to strike*): You will elope with my little girl!

ORDERLY: Captain, Rule 13.

CAPTAIN: I forgot. An officer is not permitted to strike an inferior, but you miserable scoun——

ORDERLY (*interrupting*): Rule 50.

CAPTAIN: Damn the rules! I am not even allowed to abuse a fellow who coolly walks off with my daughter!

FRANZ: Captain, I assure you——

CAPTAIN: Silence, sir. When you are addressed by your superiors you must keep still. (*Aside:*) I can't even have him court-martialed for eloping with my Eva. There is nothing against it in the articles of war. (*Calmer to Franz:*) The country needs every available man, and I must let this pass for the present, but mind, after the war—I will break your neck, if you have any left! Now get into your rotten automobile and proceed according to orders. (*To his men:*) Company attention, about face, forward, march! (*Exit with company.*)

(*Franz is about to crank the auto when Bella calls from tonneau.*)

BELLA: Oh, sergeant!

FRANZ (*astonished*): Another! This must be a peripatetic ladies seminary. (*As Bella dismounts:*) How many of you are there?

BELLA: Mr. Franz!

FRANZ: What! Miss Bella in that rig? I am shocked!

BELLA: So you elope with the daughter of your employer?

FRANZ: But——

BELLA: Silence, sir! When you talk to your betters you must shut up.

FRANZ (*salutes*): Yes, sir.

BELLA: And embrace her in public. Now don't deny it. I saw it through a crack in the cover. You seemed to enjoy it, too. Oh, Franz, how could you?

FRANZ: Miss Bella, you know better.

BELLA: I suspect you soldiers. You are so forward, especially a Uhlan and a chauffeur.

FRANZ: What shall I do with you, dear child of misfortune?

BELLA: Poor me, all alone with a fierce Uhlan in this wilderness.

FRANZ: Well, I am not a bear and won't eat you. But if you prefer to walk back, the road is splendid and it is only twenty-five miles.

BELLA: You would not leave me here alone?

FRANZ: But what can I do? I must proceed to headquarters, and a young lady alone with a young man at night—— The proprieties, Miss.

BELLA: Eva says that in time of war it is quite the thing to be improper. It is even permissible to swear in the company of ladies.

FRANZ: Oh, you heard me? It was a great relief, I assure you. But I beg a thousand pardons.

BELLA: Mr. Franz, I am not a lady, I am a boy; you may consider me your little brother.

FRANZ: Will that entitle me to a share of your brotherly love?

BELLA: Under present circumstances I can only promise you the sympathy of a comrade.

FRANZ: Little flirt! Well, jump on.

SCENE 3

(Sleeping room in Chateau d'Un. Enter squad of soldiers under the command of a corporal, travel-stained. They relieve themselves of impedimenta, examine the furniture and make themselves comfortable.)

CORPORAL *(on rocking chair, lighting pipe)*: This is what I call solid comfort. I haven't sat in a chair like this since I left my hut near the coal mines. *(All laugh.)*

SOLDIER: This bed reminds me of the farm, except that a crown was carved at the head of our bedstead.

CORPORAL: There is no place like it and the food is great. There is only one fault to be found.

SOLDIER: Well?

CORPORAL: At our supper to-night the wine and liqueurs were cut out by order of the lieutenant, and I am used to have a bottle of champagne at my meals in the colliery. I can't get along without it.

SOLDIER *(rings bell)*: Waiter, a bottle of wine for the corporal. Let it be dry and cold. Make it two, while you are about it. Gentlemen, will you join us?

(Enter Eugene in uniform of First Lieutenant of Chasseurs all arise and stand at salute.)

EUGENE: Ah, my children, I see you have made yourselves comfortable. Resume your seats, you are tired and need a rest. In the name of my aunt I bid you welcome to her domain. She has instructed

me to supply you with all your needs to the extent of its capacity. Nothing is too good for the army of France.

CORPORAL: I propose three cheers for the Lieutenant and his aunt. (*They cheer.*)

EUGENE: Thank you, my boys. In the words of Demoulins during the Revolution, "Let us rejoice to-day, because to-morrow we will be dead."

CORPORAL: We rejoice to die for our country.

ALL: We do.

EUGENE: I know this is not mere talk. You mean what you say. I must make the rounds of my company and see that every one is comfortable. You will have to rest on your arms, because the Germans are near and we may expect a brush any hour. Au revoir.

ALL: Au revoir, Lieutenant. (*Exit Eugene.*)

CORPORAL: Isn't he splendid? So young and such a thorough soldier.

SOLDIER: He is an honor to the regiment.

(*They smoke, play cards and otherwise entertain themselves.*)

VOICE OUTSIDE: Corporal of the Guard!

CORPORAL: Attention! To arms!

(*All rise hurriedly, take muskets and stand at attention. Enter Franz, disheveled and bound, prodded by the bayonet of a soldier. After him follows Bella timidly.*)

CORPORAL: What have we here? A German soldier?

SOLDIER: He is an Uhlan. We found him on an automobile across the border.

CORPORAL: An Uhlan! Let me look at him. Why, I thought they had horns, and a tail and a cloven foot. I am disappointed. He looks quite ordinary.

SOLDIER: He may look ordinary, but he can fight like a tiger. Although he was unarmed, we had to knock him senseless and then tie him, because he would not surrender. If they can fight like that on foot and without arms, what will they do when on horseback in full armor.

CORPORAL: And who is the other, a spy?

SOLDIER: I suppose so. He is rather young.

CORPORAL: We will soon find out. Search him.

(Bella shrinks behind Franz, who makes strenuous efforts to protect her, but is restrained by the others.)

BELLA: Please, please, Mr. Officer, don't search me. I am so ticklish around my neck!

(Enter Eugene.)

EUGENE: Corporal, what is all this noise about and whom have we here?

CORPORAL: Spies, Lieutenant.

EUGENE: Nonsense, one of them is in uniform. Where did you find them?

SOLDIER: On the other side of the border. They were in an automobile.

EUGENE: What became of it?

SOLDIER: It blew up.

EUGENE (*laughing*): You had a lucky escape. Some of these machines are more dangerous than mines. The Uhlan is a prisoner of war and entitled to be treated with every consideration. Untie him. (*To Franz:*) In the name of France permit me to apologize for the indignity inflicted upon you and (*smiling*) to welcome you on French soil, although the visit was unexpected. My men mean well, but at times they are rough. Who is the boy?

FRANZ (*stammering*): My—ah—my little brother.

EUGENE: He is a civilian, and having been taken on German territory, he cannot be considered either a spy or a prisoner of war. The general will determine his status to-morrow. In the meantime accept my hospitality. (*He puts his arm around Bella's neck.*) Don't be afraid, little one. We won't hurt you. (*Bella shrinks back. Eugene looks at her sharply. To Franz:*) Sergeant, did you say this was your little brother?

BELLA: Of course I am. We ought to know our family relations.

EUGENE: And where were you taking him to, Sergeant?

FRANZ: To headquarters at Luneville.

EUGENE: Oh, I didn't know that your generals kept little brothers at headquarters during the war.

FRANZ (*about to assault Eugene*): What do you mean to insinuate, Lieutenant?

EUGENE: Friend, don't be foolish. You are in our power and any foolhardiness may lead to severe measures, for which I would be sorry. You have no right to complain of suspicions which are brought about by your own conduct. I have no desire, however, to insult a captive or to disturb the incognito of the young gentleman. Achille, bring a chair. The child looks worn out. (*Conducts Bella to chair and bows.*)

FRANZ: Lieutenant, I beg your pardon and thank you for your consideration.

EUGENE: Do not mention it. There is nothing personal against you. I rather like you, and even enemies may be courteous when they murder each other.

FRANZ: I feel the same way, and wish this feeling were more general and that the murder were entirely eliminated.

EUGENE: I am sorry that I have no other accommodations for you and your brother except this room, which I will have vacated for your use. I will have refreshments sent up to you, which the young gentleman seems to require badly. (*To corporal:*) Corporal, let your men repair to the large ballroom.

CORPORAL (*to squad*): Resume arms, fall in. Attention. Forward, march! (*Exit with squad.*)

EUGENE (*bowing to Bella*): Gentlemen, let me wish you good appetite and an undisturbed rest. (*Exit.*)

BELLA: Isn't he just lovely?

FRANZ: He is a charging fellow.

BELLA: And a Frenchman. Why, he deserves to be a German.

FRANZ: Frenchmen are not so bad even in times of war.

*(A soldier brings a tray of edibles and wine.
Franz and Bella eat and drink.)*

BELLA: Doesn't it taste good? I was so hungry.

FRANZ: And to think that we two sit here in a cosy room
at the same table just like——

BELLA *(interrupting)*: Two brothers.

FRANZ: That is just what I was going to remark.

BELLA *(stretching)*: I feel so tired.

FRANZ: There is a beautiful bed for you.

BELLA: And you?

FRANZ: I will have to look for some other place. There
will be room outside with the Frenchmen. *(He
walks toward door.)*

BELLA: Franz, you are not going to leave me alone in
the hands of the enemy?

FRANZ: I can't stay in this room with you—the propri-
eties.

BELLA: There is a moratorium of propriety. Oh, Franz,
will you please look at this picture and tell me what
it represents *(Points to a picture on the wall.)*

*(While Franz examines picture she removes shoes
and coat, draws a blanket around her and falls asleep
on bed.)*

FRANZ: The picture—— *(He turns around and looks
at her.)* War is hell! *(He wraps a tablecloth
around him and sits in a chair, placing his feet on
another chair, extinguishes the light and falls asleep.)*

(The stage is darkened during five minutes, while military music intermingles German and French airs, followed by distant roar of cannon and musketry discharges. The stage gradually turns to dawn, disclosing Bella and Franz still asleep. The rattle of musketry awakes them.)

BELLA: Franz, Franz, dear, save me!

FRANZ *(still asleep)*: Bella, sweetheart, I come. *(He awakens, rubs his eyes and jumps up.)* Miss Bella, are you here? Oh, I am so glad! I dreamed—never mind—it was horrible, but you are safe.

BELLA *(snuggles up to him and takes his hand)*: They are shooting.

FRANZ: Impossible. I heard nothing. *(Shots are heard.)*

FRANZ: That is musketry. It sounds like a battle. I will see. *(He approaches window.)*

BELLA *(frightened)*: Don't go there. You might be hit.

FRANZ: Why, little timid, I am a soldier and must get used to such things. *(Looks out.)* I see a company of Germans deploying from the Moselle. They are coming nearer. There must have been quite some fighting during the night, and I slept through it.

BELLA: Oh, what will we do here, right in the midst of a battle?

FRANZ: Don't be afraid. They have no cannons. The walls are thick, and if you hide in that corner you will be safe from stray bullets. I will see what is doing and skirmish for breakfast.

BELLA (*throws her arms around him*): Franz, don't leave me!

FRANZ: I will certainly not leave while under such restraint. Poor dear!

(*Noise is heard outside, the door is opened, and French soldiers enter, followed by Eugene with bandaged head.*)

EUGENE: This is our last stand. Barricade the door and windows. (*The door and windows are barricaded.*) We will delay them in any event. Help may arrive. (*To Bella and Franz:*) Ah, my friends, I had forgotten you. Excuse the inhospitality, but we are hard pressed. This is no place for you. There is a passageway to the cellar. You are safe down there. Right through that door.

FRANZ: I am a soldier and won't hide in the cellar.

EUGENE: Man, don't be stubborn. You are still my prisoner. You cannot do anything here to aid us, and we cannot afford to have a German in our rear. Besides, you must take care of your brother. (*Opens door, bowing to Bella.*) Will you precede? (*Shoves Franz gently after her.*) Good-bye, my friend. We may not meet again.

A VOICE OUTSIDE: Surrender!

EUGENE: The Twentieth Chasseurs dies, but it does not surrender! Fire!

(*After the exchange of shots the door is broken down and Captain Stamm enters at the head of his company. Eugene is about to shoot, but drops his revolver and they stare at each other.*)

EUGENE: Father!

CAPTAIN: Eugene, my son, in a French uniform!

EUGENE: I do not yield to superior force, but surrender to my father. (*To his men:*) Ground arms! (*They drop their guns.*)

CAPTAIN: Traitor, die! (*He is about to run Eugene through with his sword when Orderly arrests his arm.*)

ORDERLY: For God's sake, Captain, you can't kill an unarmed enemy after surrender. Whatever crime he may have committed he is entitled to a trial.

CAPTAIN (*sheathing his sword*): You are right. He must die by the judgment of a court-martial. (*To Eugene:*) Lieutenant, your sword. (*Eugene hands his sword, which Captain Stamm breaks, throwing the pieces at his feet.*) That for the sword of a traitor. (*To Orderly:*) Remove the prisoners.

(*A commotion at the door. A voice, "The General!" The soldiers line up and stand at attention. Salute. Enter General von Freiberg.*)

GENERAL: Captain, let me congratulate you upon your victory. Your coup was well planned and brilliantly executed. I will ercommend you for the Iron Cross. What's the matter with you, Albert; you don't seem to be overjoyed?

CAPTAIN: I am in deep trouble, General. (*Pointing to Eugene:*) This is my son.

GENERAL: What, Eugene! in French uniform and bearing arms against his native land? (*To Eugene:*) Young man, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

The son of such a father and a traitor! What is this world coming to? (*To Orderly:*) Take your prisoners.

(*Exit Orderly and soldiers.*)

GENERAL: This is a serious business, Albert. You know what it means.

CAPTAIN: Let the traitor die. That he had never been born. Oh, my Eugene, he was such a good boy, a dutiful son, and so talented. You know I had never intended him for a military career. He seemed so timid and retiring, like a girl. Eva was the boy of the family. But I had intended him to become a great artist. His mother insisted upon his studying in Paris. I was weak enough to consent. Of course, no one foresaw this war and now the death of a traitor.

GENERAL: We must save him.

CAPTAIN: I save the betrayer of his country?

GENERAL: He is your son. The times of Brutus have passed. In our days a father is not justified in sacrificing his son for reason of state.

CAPTAIN: I am not his judge.

GENERAL: You are implicated in this affair and owe your son the duty of a natural guardian and protector.

CAPTAIN: What can be done? The damage is beyond repair.

GENERAL (*whispering*): Mightn't he escape?

CAPTAIN: General, you are not serious? That would be

a grave military crime. The facts are known and I would be charged with complicity. Eugene would not accept life on such terms. I know the boy. Whatever may be the errors of his ways, he would never consent to liberty at the cost of his father's honor.

GENERAL: An appeal to the Emperor.

CAPTAIN: The Emperor is far away and court-martials act with fearful speed.

GENERAL: Let me think. Some way must be found to save that young life.

(Commotion outside.)

MRS. STAMM: Let me in, I say! I must see my husband! *(Rushes in with soldier in pursuit, trying to restrain her.)*

CAPTAIN *(to General)*: Good God, his mother! Keep it from her. *(To Mrs. Stamm:)* Triene, where do you come from, and in this condition?

MRS. STAMM: Where is Eugene? Have you killed the boy?

CAPTAIN: The boy is alive and well.

MRS. STAMM: Then he has escaped. Thank God!

GENERAL: He is a prisoner.

MRS. STAMM: A prisoner of war? Can I see him?

CAPTAIN: I fear it will not be possible at present.

GENERAL *(taking Captain aside)*: You can't keep the mother from seeing her boy before—the inevitable.

MRS. STAMM: What are you men whispering about?

Why are you so embarrassed? Albert, did you lie to me? Is Eugene dead and will I never see him again?

GENERAL: Madam, be calm, your son is still alive.

CAPTAIN: He was taken bearing arms against his country.

GENERAL: That is a crime for which he will have to be tried by court-martial.

MRS. STAMM: Court-martial! I know your court-martials. They convict first and try afterwards.

GENERAL: It is a sad duty.

MRS. STAMM: Duty! What do you cruel men know about duty? With your stupid law and savage code of honor? Duty is not a mathematical term. Duty is not an exact science. You cannot judge duty by your standard. What you men call duty we women call inhumanity. It may be justifiable to kill a human being as a matter of self-preservation; it may be excusable to meet an avowed enemy in open battle, where each man is armed to slay. But it is neither justifiable nor excusable for strong men in cold blood to murder an inoffensive boy because his views of duty do not coincide with theirs, or because he may have been led astray by temptations, the impulsion of which you old men have long since forgotten. For such an act your conscience will condemn you. God will punish you and history will brand you as the blood-stained butchers that you are!

CAPTAIN: Restrain yourself, Triene. Your language is unfit for the wife of a soldier.

MRS. STAMM: This is no time for restraint; this is no occasion for hypocrisy and deceit. It demands a sacrifice to prevent a crime. Albert, Eugene is not your son and he is a Frenchman!

CAPTAIN (*grasps her arm*): Woman, is that true? Where is the man that I may kill him?

MRS. STAMM: What man?

CAPTAIN: The man who seduced you from your marriage vows—the man who defiled my home! I want revenge!

MRS. STAMM: You suspect that I—— (*Covers her face.*) Oh, God! such a charge from my own husband, whom I have loved loyally for more than twenty-five years, whom I have honored and served on my very knees! How willing you men are to suspect our loyalty. I am not his mother.

CAPTAIN: Not his mother?

MRS. STAMM: Albert, I have deceived you, and have suffered for years and years for that deception, but not the way you suspect. Listen. My family is of ancient French extraction. We children were born in Lorraine, some before, some after the annexation to Germany. At heart we were all French. I had a younger sister whom I cherished with all my heart. She was betrayed—not by a Frenchman. When the result of that misstep could no longer be concealed she went to Verdun, on a visit to friends, as she claimed. It was partly to hide her shame and partly to have her child born on French soil, because she hated Germany and all it stood for. At that time you were on a political expedition in Africa. Our child

was a few months old when you left, and both of us adored it. It died during your absence. I had not the courage to inform you. It was wrong, it was cowardly, I know. When sister's child was born, shortly after the death of my own, I, heartbroken and lonesome, gladly adopted it as mine. The substitution took place with the aid of a nurse. It was Eugene. I came to love the child, and when, after many months, we were reunited at a distant garrison, I would not part with it. You never discovered the deception, which a mother would have noticed at a glance. You men are so blind. My sister married an old man who adored her. She could not disclose to him her shame, and so the boy remained with me for years. After the death of her husband she yearned for her child, and we contrived to have him sent to Paris for her comfort and for the sake of his art. You men are so easily deceived. He became French to his heart and soul, as it was intended that he should be, although that fact caused me many a tear. Constance is his mother.

CAPTAIN: Your sister Constance? Incredible!

MRS. STAMM (*listlessly*): Here is the proof. I brought it along. I felt the war would imperatively force a confession. (*She takes a bundle of papers from a bag and hands them to General, who examines them.*)

GENERAL: Certificate of birth and baptism at Verdun—letters from Eugene's mother. Everything in perfect order. The proof is complete. (*Slaps Captain on shoulder.*) Good news, old friend. This changes the complexion of affairs. (*Kisses Mrs. Stamm's*

hand.) Madam, I sympathize with you and thank you from the bottom of my heart for your timely confession.

CAPTAIN: I am stunned. I do not know what to say.
(*Places arm around his wife tenderly.*) Don't cry, Triene. I don't blame you. Everything has turned out all right.

GENERAL: The boy—we must not leave him in suspense.
(*Calls through doorway:*) Orderly, bring up the French Lieutenant. He is to be treated with the greatest distinction as a brave soldier. Do you hear?

(*Enter Eugene. Seeing Mrs. Stamm, he embraces her.*)

EUGENE: Oh, Mother, I am so glad to see you!

MRS. STAMM: My boy, my dear boy!

GENERAL (*shakes Eugene's hand warmly*): Lieutenant, I want to congratulate you upon your courage and masterly defense. I hear you fought like a lion.

CAPTAIN (*embracing him*): Eugene, I am proud of you. You are a brave soldier and an excellent leader.

EUGENE (*stunned*): What does this mean?

CAPTAIN: It is a long story. Mother, you tell him.

(*Mrs. Stamm and Eugene walk up stage in earnest conversation.*)

GENERAL (*wiping his face*): The perspiration runs down my cheeks. Captain, you and I had a narrow escape from the participation in a crime, which would have tortured our souls in this life and during several million years of a hereafter. The saying that a woman is at the bottom of things is only half a

truth. As a rule there are at least two women in the sub-cellar.

CAPTAIN: Since I have found my Eugene again I am sorry to lose him as a son.

GENERAL: At one time, however, you were willing——

CAPTAIN: Don't speak of it. I must have been insane.

GENERAL: I knew you would not have sacrificed him, and I would have allowed him to escape if I had had to kick him out. Even soldiers are white in spots.

EUGENE (*coming down stage*): Only a few minutes ago I was a traitor because I was German, now I am a hero because I am a Frenchman. It is perplexing.

GENERAL: Yes, my boy, from a hero to a traitor is but one step, across an imaginary boundary line. (*Listening.*) What in thunder is this? It sounds like an invasion from Hades.

(*Enter Eva in the clothes of a peasant girl, rushes toward Eugene and embraces him.*)

EVA: Oh, Eugene, I have found you at last, and wounded, poor brother!

CAPTAIN: Eva, where do you come from? I thought you were a captive at a farmhouse?

EVA: Puh, for your captivity! I am my father's daughter and your whole army couldn't keep me in prison. I broke open the door, climbed over the fence, and here I am. (*To Eugene:*) And you were not locked up in a dungeon, dear brother?

CAPTAIN: He is not your brother.

EVA: Not my brother! How is that?

CAPTAIN: He is your foster brother. We adopted him when he was quite young.

EUGENE: But I am your cousin.

MRS. STAMM: Aunt Constance is his mother.

EVA: Aunt Constance! And I thought—— So the dear Constance is your poor old mother (*laughs*). Excuse me, but it is too funny!

EUGENE: I don't see the joke.

EVA: You don't? You never will. It is on me, and I won't tell.

(*Enter Franz in doorway leading from cellar.*)

CAPTAIN: Who is this? What, Franz? Where did you drop down from?

FRANZ (*ruefully*): I dropped up from the cellar.

CAPTAIN: Did you hide in the cellar? You, a German soldier?

FRANZ: I was forced to. I was a prisoner of war.

CAPTAIN: Where were you taken?

FRANZ: On your damned automobile. It wouldn't budge an inch. It seemed to be frightened stiff when it saw the Frenchmen.

CAPTAIN: What became of the machine?

FRANZ: The poor thing is dead; it exploded from fright. Heart disease.

(*General, who has been conversing with Mrs. Stamm, turns and sees Franz.*)

GENERAL: Why, Franz, my dear boy. (*Embraces him.*)

I am so glad to see you again. Your mother has been worrying about you. (*To Captain:*) This is my boy, Franz.

CAPTAIN: Your son? I knew him as Franz Frei.

FRANZ: I dropped the "berg" when I left home.

GENERAL: Franz has imbibed some socialistic notions about capital and labor and the idle rich. He would not be supported by his father, so he left home to make what he calls his career by honest toil. I suppose he had all the toil he looked for, but found it hard to be honest, and as for the career, I assume it is in the dim future. (*To Franz:*) Well, boy, I am glad that your socialism did not keep you from the service.

CAPTAIN (*takes Eva by the hand, leading her to Franz*): Since he is the son of my dear friend whom I have known in his early childhood, Eva, take your Franz.

EVA: My Franz! What shall I do with him?

CAPTAIN: Why, didn't you—aren't you—

EVA: Foolish Papa! You men are so dense. We are nothing to each other except very good friends. I believe his heart is with someone who might very seriously object to the intrusion of another. (*To Franz:*) Where is she, he, it?

FRANZ: She is down in the cellar.

EVA: What? In the subterranean dungeons of the enchanted castle?

FRANZ: I will get her. (*Calls at entrance to cellar:*) Birdie, the coast is clear!

(*Enter Bella.*)

EVA (*embracing her*): Oh, Bella, dear, you are safe!
I was so worried.

FRANZ (*takes her hand and leads her to the General*):
Father, I have concluded to marry this boy.

GENERAL: Well, appearances furnish no assurances of domesticity, but since *he* is your choice, I gladly give my consent. (*Embraces her.*)

EUGENE (*taking Eva, with whom he has earnestly conversed, to Captain*): Father—for I will still call you so—Eva and I have concluded that cousinship is not a sufficiently close relation, and since we can't be sister and brother, we have become engaged.

MRS. STAMM (*smiling*): What, Eva? You a patriotic German, marry a Frenchman?

EVA (*hiding her face on her mother's bosom*): Mama, love knows no country and marriage recognizes no boundary line.

(*Enter Orderly.*)

ORDERLY: A large body of French cavalry and artillery is crossing the mountains to the west. It looks like an army corps.

GENERAL: We must waste no time. Orderly, detail a squad as an escort for our prisoners and the ladies. Let the company fall in for retreat across the border and have my staff mount their horses. I will be down presently.

ORDERLY: Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

GENERAL: Captain, you have done well on French soil,

but a company even of German soldiers cannot well engage with an army of the enemy. Retreat under such conditions is a necessity, not a disgrace. (*To Franz:*) Franz, my boy, you are detailed as an Orderly on my staff. After the war we will take measures to have you earn an honest living instead of being compelled to starve. (*To Eugene:*) Lieutenant, I am sorry that you must still be considered a prisoner of war, but I will take the responsibility of placing you in the care of your intended, provided I have your word of honor that you will not escape.

EVA (*taking Eugene's arm*): Escape? I give *my* word of honor that the prisoner will not escape—me.

GENERAL: Your word is abundant under the circumstances and the prisoner is paroled into your custody. Captain, let us see whether things are ready for retreat. (*To Franz:*) Sergeant, follow me and report to my chief of staff. Ladies, we will meet before you depart. (*Exit General, Captain and Franz.*)

(*Enter Constance from side door leading to cellar.*)

CONSTANCE: Eugene!

EUGENE (*who has conversed with the ladies, turns abruptly and, perceiving Constance, hurries to her, sinks down to his knee and covers her hands with kisses*): Constance! Mother! Dearest mother!

CONSTANCE (*raising him and embracing him fervently*): You know, my dear child. And can you forgive your erring mother?

EUGENE: There is nothing to forgive. I can only remember the years of loving devotion with which you have enriched me, and for which I can never sufficiently compensate you.

(During that scene the other ladies have shown differing emotions: Mrs. Stamm, pleasure mixed with surprise; Eva, jealous attention; Bella, deep interest.)

MRS. STAMM *(hurrying toward Constance to embrace her)*: Dear sister! What a pleasant surprise. How did you get here?

CONSTANCE: I came in advance of the army. I feared for Eugene. I left my automobile at the greenhouse in the rear and hurried to the chateau through the cellar vaults with which it connects.

EUGENE *(to Eva)*: Dearest, come to our mother. *(She approaches, hesitating. He leads her to Constance.)* Mother, let me introduce to you my future wife.

CONSTANCE: Is that little Eva, your sister?

EUGENE: My former sister, who has promised to be more to me.

CONSTANCE: You surprise me, but if she is your elect she must be worthy of my boy. *(To Eva:)* Come to my arms, dear daughter. *(Eva embraces her, still somewhat distant and doubtful.) (To Eugene:)* And now, my boy, come with me and join our friends.

EUGENE: Why, Mother, I am a prisoner of war.

CONSTANCE: Not now, since I have led an army to the rescue.

EVA (*anxiously*): Eugene, you will not——

EUGENE: Fear not, dear heart. Your sword binds me safer than chains of steel. (*To Constance:*) I cannot. I am under parole.

CONSTANCE (*sadly*): I perceive. Love of a woman has turned you from your country.

EUGENE: Do not say so, Mother. I was willing to sacrifice my life for France, and would gladly do so again if opportunity offered, but I cannot sacrifice my honor. I was relieved from actual restraint upon my parole and there is no such thing as a rescue or escape from my word of honor. I would be dishonored among my colleagues in France as I would be among our German foes. Mother, come with us.

CONSTANCE: No, no, my child. Perhaps in better days, after this war. Now my country needs me. I cannot betray or leave it. Hush! I hear steps. I must not be seen by our enemies. Good-bye, my dearest, until we meet again. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter General and Captain.*)

GENERAL: Ladies, everything is ready for departure. Your comfort is provided for. Duty calls me. Let me bid you good-bye. A pleasant journey and may we soon meet again. (*To Captain:*) Friend Albert, my prophesies are coming true. Our modern trend is towards the extinction of the race, but wars do not last forever. The conflagration is bound to subside for lack of fuel, and let us hope that from the wreck of our civilization there may arise a race who are willing to bring to earth the kingdom which reigns

in heaven by a new proclamation of the brotherhood
of men.

(CURTAIN.)



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